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ABSTRACT

This model for starting daily and weekly planning prior to writing lesson or unit plans is intended for elementary school teachers. It is a part of a management support kit designed for teachers by the Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools system, which developed the materials to aid teachers in implementing the school system's Program of Studies, a curriculum designed for the elementary grades. Planning-decision points are identified in the model: (1) needs assessment of developmental and achievement levels of the pupils; (2) appropriate Program of Studies objectives; (3) subject areas identified in the Program of Studies; (4) effective types of learning activities; and (5) classroom learning environment. A conceptual model based on these factors, demonstrating the interdependency of decisions made in each area, is presented. Suggestions are made for using the model as an aid to planning, and an example is offered showing the decision-making process that takes place as a part of preliminary planning for lessons on listening skills. A planning guide for establshing an effective classroom climate is included along with a discussion on classroom climate. (JD)

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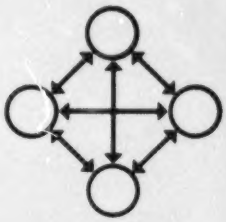
# STARTING POINTS FOR DAILY/WEEKLY PLANNING



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Management for Effective Teaching

How do teachers begin their instructional planning? Research suggests that teachers' planning decisions do not always begin with a specification of goals and objectives. Objectives are one important planning consideration, along with the child's needs, the content to be taught and the appropriate learning activities to be carried out in the classroom. The actual starting point is less important than ensuring each component is adequately considered in the planning process.

Analysis of teachers' planning decisions suggests that some teachers begin planning with:

- Objectives, reflecting Tyler's model which separates ends (objectives) from means (processes) to specify how students will behave once they are processed through the instructional program.
- Student needs assessment, prior to identification of objectives, reflecting Taba's model which also focuses on student motivation and practice.
- Learning activities based on teacher knowledge of content and available materials identified prior to objectives, reflecting models of McDonald and Eisner which integrate ends and means.

The model, Starting Points for Daily/Weekly Planning, is based on research and has been developed to provide a structure to prepare for effective planning.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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## STARTING POINTS MODEL

### Starting Points for Daily/Weekly Planning

Planning often begins with a series of teacher decisions about the child, objectives, content, and activities/learning environment as shown by the four circles or points on the model in Figure 1. Recent research (Koeller and Thompson, 1980) of teachers who were identified as superior by peers, students and principals, suggests that some successful teachers start planning with objectives, some with student needs, and others with activities and content. More importantly, they seemed to incorporate and emphasize all four decision points in their daily/weekly plans. The planning model provides a practical structure and process for effective planning, whether the teacher's theoretical orientation is that of Tyler, Taba, or Anderson, or Eisner.

Starting Points for Daily/Weekly Planning is a conceptual model designed to assist teachers as they make planning decisions.

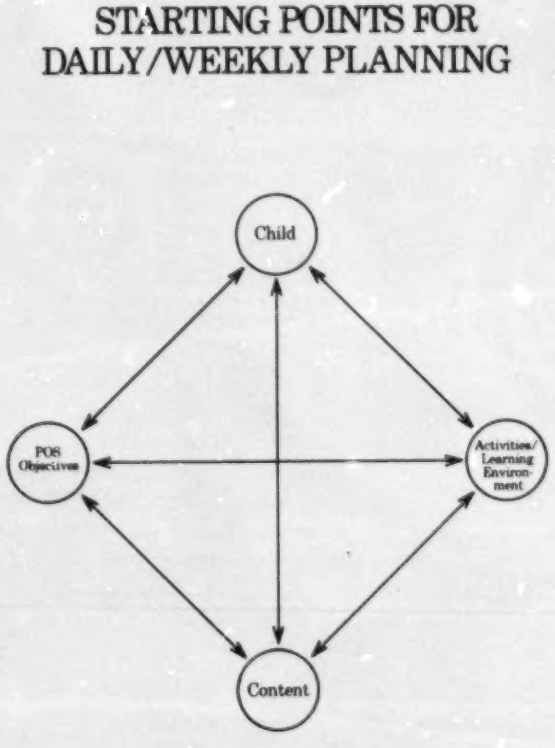


**Figure 1: Starting Points for Daily/Weekly Planning**

Planning-Decision Points

When planning for teaching consider the following:

- Needs assessment of developmental and achievement levels
- Diagnostic information
- Attitudes
- Motivation
- Interests

- Checklist of appropriate POS objectives
- Short- and long-range planning
- Balanced curriculum
- Students needs
- Schoolwide or systemwide emphasis

- Subject areas (identified in POS)
- Knowledge objectives in POS
- Adopted textbooks
- Current events
- Topics of special interest to students or teacher

- Activities
  - student directed
  - teacher directed
  - individual, small, or large group
  - problem solving
  - creative
  - skill

- Learning environment
  - centers
  - grouping/seating
  - special equipment or materials
  - communication flow

## How To Use The Model

The model is a planning tool that teachers may wish to use prior to writing lesson or unit plans. The following suggestions are made to help teachers use the model:

1. Locate blank copies (11" x 17") of the model in the Management Support Kit folder for daily/weekly planning.

2. Use the model to direct your thought processes and make planning decisions.

3. Start with an idea that you think would be appropriate for daily or weekly instruction.

4. Locate the point on the chart that the planning idea represents.

5. Write ideas on the model beside the identified planning point.

6. Decide what should be considered next and jot your ideas beside that point on the model.

7. Continue the process by asking questions such as:

   - How can each child will experience success in learning?
   - What should be considered next?
   - How can it be accomplished?
   - How can I best give equal consideration to each decision point?
   - How can POS social-emotional objectives be included?
   - Do POS language arts objectives for listening effectively and participating in group discussions need to be included? What activities or content can be used?
   - How can I incorporate ideas to create a positive classroom climate?

8. Evaluate your planning with questions such as the following:

   - Are POS objectives appropriate? Is more than one subject area listed to promote content integration and application of learning?
   - Is there balanced emphasis for each of the planning decision points?
   - Will the activities meet POS objectives?
   - Are the activities and content appropriate to the level and interests of students?
   - Is the learning environment structured to support learning?

9. Revise, expand, or delete ideas based on your evaluation.

10. Based on decisions made, write specific daily/weekly lesson plans.

The planning ideas that teachers write on their blank planning model sheets are intended for their own use to bridge the gap between planning decisions and written daily/weekly lesson plans.

**Example of Planning-Decisions Model Process**

An example of the use of the model, Starting Points for Daily/Weekly Planning, is shown in Figure 2. The example shows the decision-making process that took place as part of the preliminary planning for several lessons on listening skills.

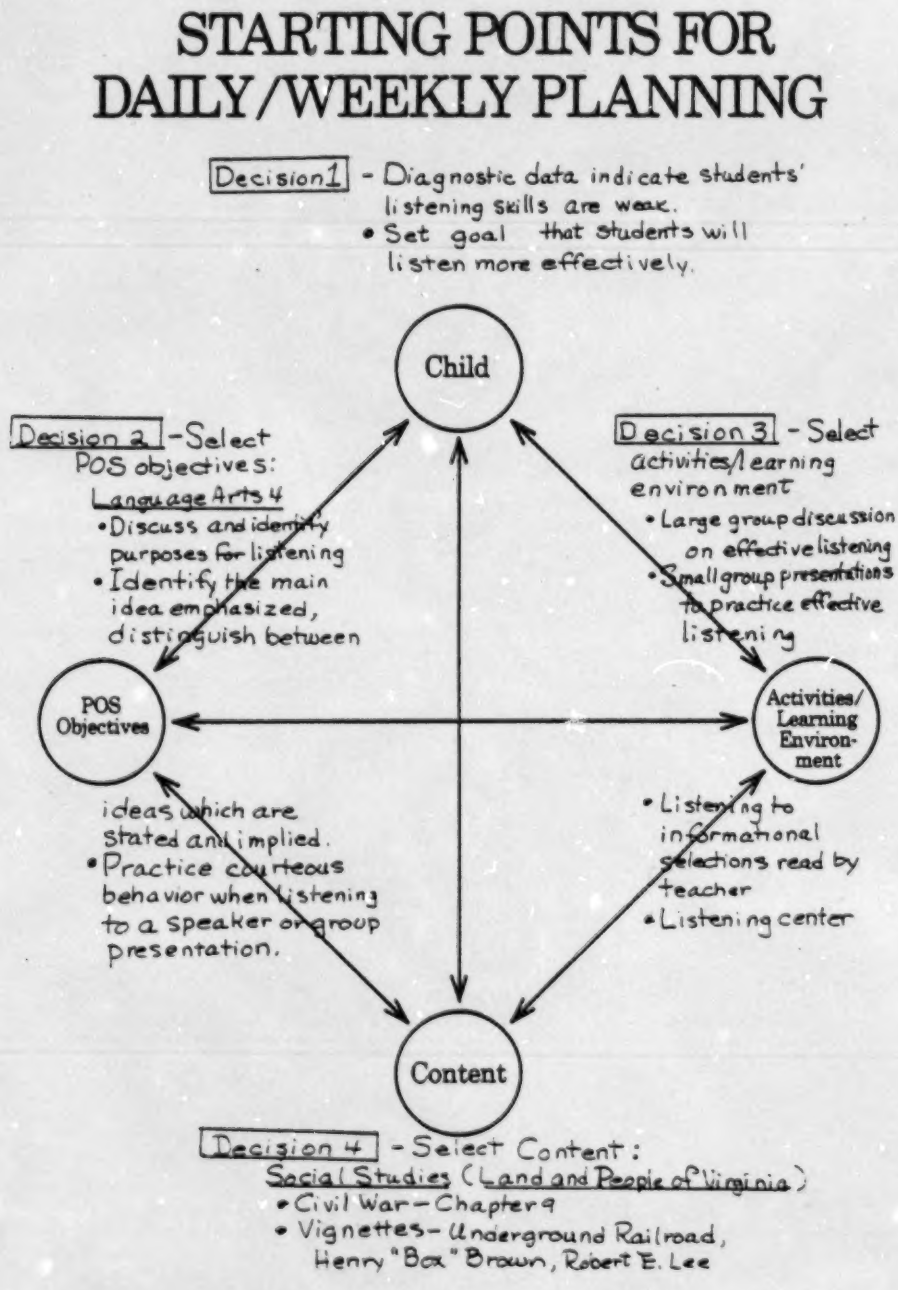
STARTING POINTS FOR DAILY/WEEKLY PLANNING
Decision 1 - Diagnostic data indicate students' listening skills are weak.
• Set goal that students will listen more effectively.
Child
Decision 2 - Select POS objectives:
Language Arts 4
• Discuss and identify purposes for listening
• Identify the main idea emphasized, distinguish between
Decision 3 - Select activities/learning environment
• Large group discussion on effective listening
• Small group presentations to practice effective listening
POS Objectives
Activities/ Learning Environment
ideas which are stated and implied.
• Practice courteous behavior when listening to a speaker or group presentation.
• Listening to informational selections read by teacher
• Listening center
Content
Decision 4 - Select Content:
Social Studies (Land and People of Virginia)
• Civil War - Chapter 9
• Vignettes - Underground Railroad, Henry "Box" Brown, Robert E. Lee

Figure 2. Example of a Teacher's Use of Starting Points for Daily/Weekly Planning Model

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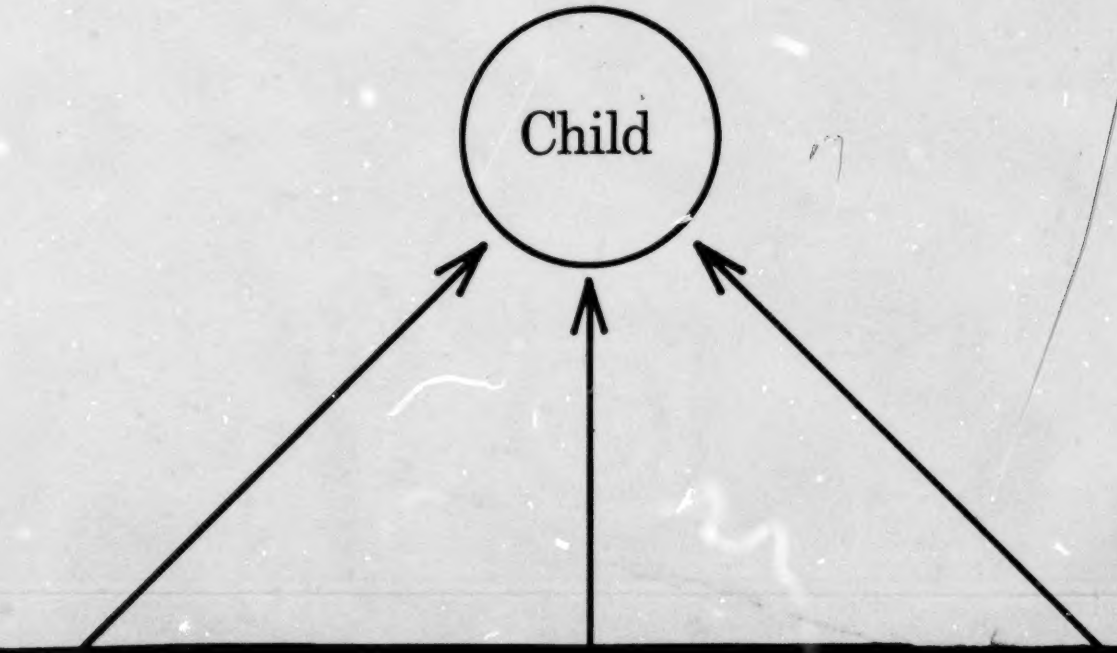

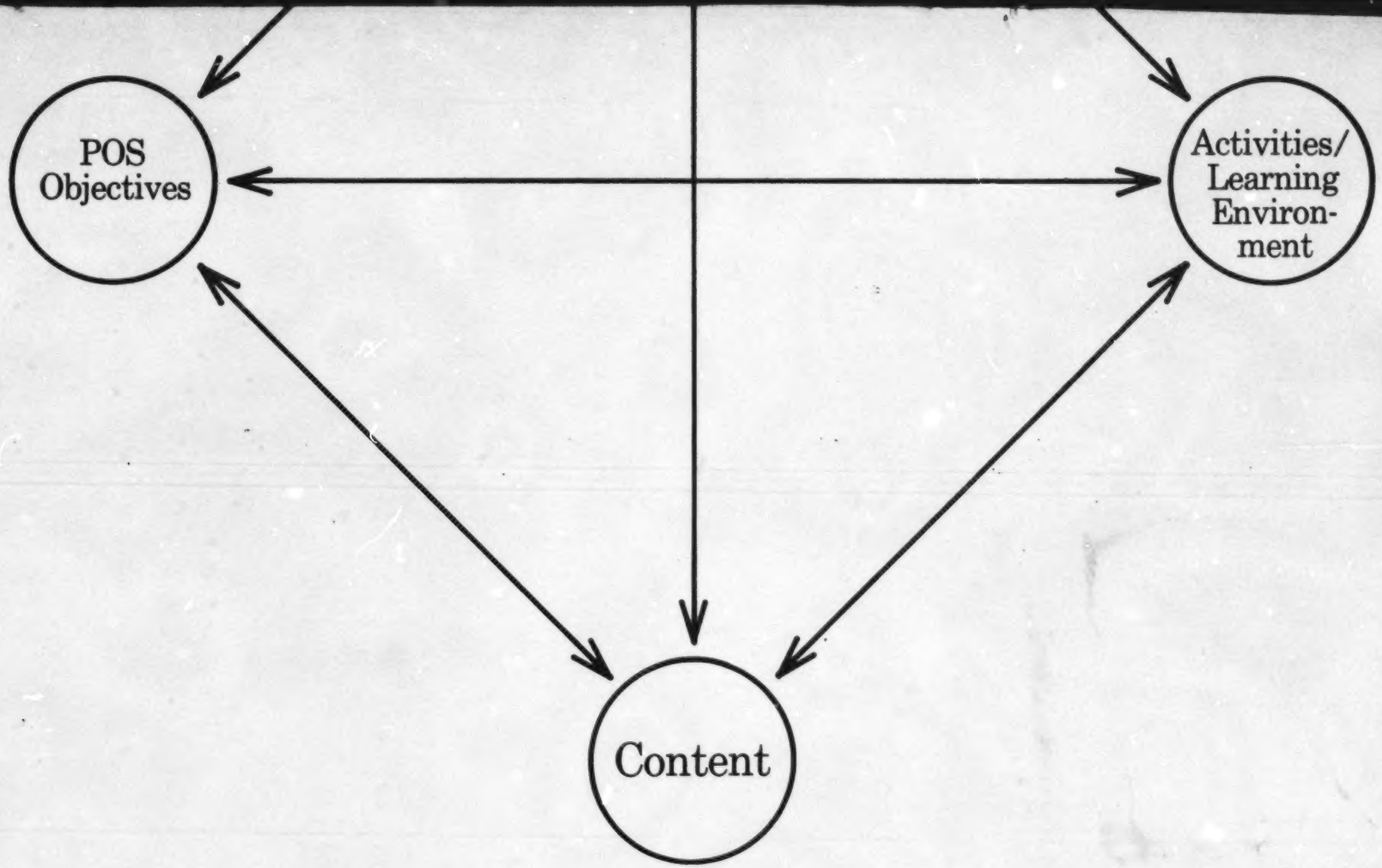
POS Objectives
Activities/ Learning Environ- ment
Content

# CLASSROOM CLIMATE

## Purpose

The purpose of this section on classroom climate is to: describe classroom climate; discuss research on classroom climate; and provide suggestions and a planning guide for effective classroom climate

## What is Classroom Climate?

The classroom is believed to have a distinct atmosphere or climate analogous to the personality of an individual. Classrooms with positive climate are characterized by group cohesiveness, high morale, and an emphasis on productivity. Major climate factors are direct consequences of the teacher's management of teaching. They include factors such as cognitive focus, learning, caring, cohesiveness, communication, rewards, and classroom rules.

## What Does Research Say About Climate?

The climate established by the teacher has a very significant effect on the cognitive growth of students. It can improve or retard student learning. The climate has a significant impact on student achievement, attitudes toward learning, problem solving ability, and classroom morale (Aspy and Roebuck, 1974; Aspy and Roebuck, 1982). Following is a brief list of research-based suggestions for creating a positive, thus productive and satisfying, classroom climate:

- Plan carefully to use the first day of school to set the tone for the entire year.
- Communicate clear and reasonable expectations about student achievement and behavior.
- Show students what to do, and give them practice in doing it.
- Use "authorative" leadership (leadership by an experienced adult who has a position of authority and responsibility and retains ultimate decision-making power in the classroom).
- Develop group cohesiveness and high morale, an "our classroom" attitude.
- Accept and respect each student as an individual; foster an attitude of caring and respect within the classroom.

## Classroom Climate Planning Guide

The enclosed planning guide consists of eight climate factors and suggested strategies for developing a positive classroom climate that is conducive to learning. Space is provided for teachers to list ideas to use.

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| Selected Climate Factors | My Climate Ideas to Use |
|---|---|
| 5. Communications<br>Strategies:<br>• encourage open, honest communication<br>• identify appropriate methods of informal communication in the classroom<br>• increase student abilities to communicate effectively in large and small group work<br>• create opportunities for active listening with students individually and in small groups<br>•<br>• | |
| 6. Goals<br>Strategies:<br>• establish your own goals for the class<br>• involve students in setting their own goals for the year<br>• encourage students to have academic as well as social-emotional goals<br>•<br>• | |
| 7. Cognitive Focus<br>Strategies:<br>• involve students actively in the learning process, both mentally and physically<br>• plan work for students that is interesting, rewarding and appropriate to their achievement levels<br>• maximize academic learning time<br>• encourage students to extend and enrich learning outside of school<br>•<br>• | |
| 8. Individual Needs, Abilities and Interests<br>Strategies:<br>• provide positive reinforcement<br>• recognize each student as a person with valid ideas, concerns and interests<br>• provide instruction to meet varying needs of students<br>• create means for recognizing non-academic achievements, such as "Best Listener" or "Champion Line Leader"<br>•<br>• | |





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# CLASSROOM CLIMATE

## PLANNING GUIDE

| Selected Climate Factors | My Climate Ideas to Use |
|---|---|
| 1. Classroom Community<br>Strategies:<br>• create a sense of belonging<br>• encourage formation of shared values<br>• organize for shared responsibilities and tasks<br>• instill a sense of pride and ownership, an "our classroom" attitude<br>•<br>• | |
| 2. Caring<br>Strategies:<br>• communicate a feeling that the teacher cares<br>• create a supportive atmosphere<br>• strive to create a climate where students show they care about each other<br>• focus on development of positive self-concepts<br>•<br>• | |
| 3. Logistics<br>Strategies:<br>• teach routines for smooth transitions between activities<br>• establish consistent procedures for distributing supplies and collecting work and for "housekeeping"<br>• design a workable arrangement of furniture and resources to facilitate instruction and create an interesting learning environment for students<br>•<br>• | |
| 4. Rules<br>Strategies:<br>• have few rules, stated positively<br>• stress rules the first day and periodically thereafter<br>• help students understand reasons for rules<br>• allow students to help set some standards and rules and share in appropriate decisions<br>•<br>• | |

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